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Tuesday, 26 July 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 53 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Draft resolution (A/59/L.68)

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Canada to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.68.

Mr. Rock (Canada): Canada is honoured to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.68. The objective of the draft resolution is to achieve the fairest and most democratic approach to the complex and controversial question of Security Council enlargement, while seeking the broadest possible consensus on how to proceed.

Let me begin, Sir, by explaining why Canada is introducing the draft resolution.

First, while we recognize the importance of Security Council reform, we want to see it achieved without unduly dividing the membership, particularly at a time when we must come together on the even more important agenda that we will place before leaders in September. It will not serve our larger purpose if we are left divided after choosing among resolutions that favour a few, leaving fissures and factions as we pick winners and losers once and for all.

Draft resolution A/59/L.68 represents an effort in good faith to avoid such an all-or-nothing showdown. It would add no permanent members to the Council, but rather would create new permanent seats in each region, leaving it to the members of each regional group to decide which Member States should sit in those seats and for how long. That approach would permit us to achieve all of the major objectives for Security Council reform while preserving an environment conducive to broad agreement in September and cooperation in the years ahead.

Secondly, Canada sincerely believes that it is not in the best interests of the United Nations and not in the best interests of the great majority of its Members to add new permanent members to the Security Council. Let me emphasize at once that our purpose is not to oppose the aspirants, but rather to support the principle that widening the circle for the few who seek special status, no matter how worthy their candidacies, would make the Security Council less accountable for its conduct, more remote from the membership and less representative of the world's regions.

(*spoke in French*)

Let me now describe the outcome that Canada favours.

Draft resolution A/59/L.68 would enlarge the Council to 25 members, with 20 of those to be elected for two-year terms. It would distribute the elected seats equitably among the regions. It would allow for consecutive re-election, and it would leave to each

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region the decision about arrangements for both the rotation of the seats and the duration of each member State's term on the Council.

Why do we prefer this approach? There are five reasons.

(*spoke in English*)

First, it is democratic. At a time when so many of us promote democratic principles of governance, is it not essential that we reflect those same principles in our own governance, in the crucial decision about which Member States will serve on the United Nations most powerful body? Is it not fundamental that, where regions are accorded a permanent presence, those that serve on the Council must manifestly hold the continuing confidence of their regional colleagues, tested and expressed at intervals that the regional members consider appropriate? And what is more basic to the very notion of democracy than elections — not once and forever, in which power shifts permanently to the office holder, but periodically, so that authority remains with the electors and holding the office is seen as a privilege, not a right.

After all, in a democratic system, the electorate — in this case, the Member States — must have the authority to choose its representatives. I know of no democracy in which a single election is sufficient to entitle the winner to remain in office in perpetuity.

Secondly, the approach provided for in draft resolution A/59/L.68 makes the Council more accountable to the Member States. Permanence is the polar opposite of accountability. Permanence produces positions that reflect national perspectives. Permanence claims the power of the office as of right, and forevermore.

Draft resolution A/59/L.68 takes a different approach. It accepts that there will be no change in the permanent five, but it does not expand the permanent class beyond those chosen in 1945 and it draws on more contemporary values in proposing an enlarged Council in which membership is earned by winning and keeping the confidence of one's peers. Apart from being sound in principle, the accountability that is inherent in that approach is also more likely to produce a Security Council in which regional and global concerns predominate over simply national interests.

Thirdly, our draft resolution provides for flexible allocation of Council seats. In a changing world, with its dynamic regions, it is surely unwise to lock into place arrangements that may reflect today's circumstances, when tomorrow may confront us wi very different needs. The very process of change th has now made Security Council reform desirab argues for a flexible, not a fixed, formula, for t process of change is never-ending. And who can s what changes will come in the decades ahead? And s for that reason, draft resolution A/59/L.68 allows eac regional group to adjust the allocation of seats amon its members depending upon the needs of a particul time and upon the capacity of certain of its members serve in the interests of all.

But there is another aspect of this dra resolution's flexibility that should be stressed. It allow for repeated terms of different aggregate length amon the elected seats permanently allocated to each regio Let me illustrate the value of that asymmetric approach by referring to an example.

Draft resolution A/59/L.68 permanently accor Africa six seats on the Security Council. The Africa Group has made it clear that it wants to have tw representatives on the Council who will be there for t long term. Our draft resolution empowers the Africa Group to identify two of its members who wi represent the region for as long a period as the Grou decides. Since the decision about re-election woul belong to the members of the African Group, the would have the authority to make those two Memb States continuous members of the Security Counci The result would be that the region would hav permanent seats, and the members of the region group could decide that some of those seats would b held continuously by certain of its members. Th balance of the seats set aside for Africa could be he for periods of duration to be determined by the regio That asymmetrical arrangement illustrates how t flexibility of the approach proposed in this dra resolution can be made to serve the specific interests each particular group.

Fourthly, draft resolution A/59/L.68 provides f fairness by creating the possibility that a great number of Member States could rotate through th seats allocated to each region. None of the sea created by our draft resolution would be set aside for chosen few. All 20 of the elected seats would b available to Member States. In an Organization o equal sovereign Members, there should be no second class countries. Our draft resolution would give eve State a voice.

Fifth, and finally, draft resolution A/59/L.68 provides for meaningful and effective Security Council reform, but without forcing divisive and potentially damaging votes on the General Assembly as individual States vie among themselves for special status. Each of the other draft resolutions before the Assembly provides for new permanent members of the Council. But if either one of those draft resolutions were to be adopted, that would only be the beginning of a contentious and competitive process. How much time would be needed? How many secret ballots would be cast? What tensions and pressures would be created during the inevitable subsequent steps? The approach that draft resolution L.68 puts forward would entail a single initial vote of the Assembly, with subsequent elections that would simply implement the choices of regional groups.

It is precisely because structural change in this institution is so difficult that it has been so rarely attempted. There has been but a handful of occasions in the 60-year history of the United Nations when Member States have been called upon to make defining decisions about its format and its future. And yet, there is a sense among many of us that this is such a moment: a rare opportunity to make significant change to the Organization's most significant body. When such historic decisions are made — choices that will have profound effects for generations to come — it is necessary that they be made wisely, that they be made based on principle, that they reflect our shared values and that they advance our common purpose.

In this case, and measured against that standard, Canada believes that the wiser course — the principled course — is clear. It is to choose the option that is consistent with our shared values of democracy, accountability, flexibility and fairness. We believe that draft resolution A/59/L.68 meets that test. Canada will support it, and we respectfully urge other Member States to do the same.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy, who will also introduce draft resolution A/59/L.68.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): The statement made by Ambassador Rock, the Permanent Representative of Canada, on behalf of the group of States known as Uniting for Consensus provides a forceful and meaningful illustration of the principles and values on which our draft resolution is based. Therefore, in introducing the draft resolution proposed by Uniting for Consensus, I will first of all recall the statement that I delivered on 1 July, which I am again circulating today. I should once again like to draw the attention of the members of the General Assembly to the principles, values and numbers highlighted in that statement. They are not only the milestones on which our draft resolution is anchored; they also serve to confirm that the model set out by the group of four countries is structured in such a way as to benefit just six happy few, to the detriment of all the other 180 Member States, resulting in tremendous divisive impact on the membership.

But I am sure that Member States will not accept being taken for a ride. Arrogance never pays. We are here because we believe in dialogue with an open mind; because we believe in the principles of the Charter; because we believe in the principle of the sovereign equality of all Members of the United Nations; because we believe that no reform will be able to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization if it is not rooted in the principle of fair and equal opportunity for all Members; and because only then will we be able to strengthen and enhance our sense of ownership of this house and our sense of belonging to an Organization of which we can be proud. It is in that sense, and along those lines, that the draft resolution proposed by Uniting for Consensus intends to offer a constructive and non-divisive platform for discussion and decision — a platform that, as Ambassador Rock has stated, is extremely flexible and centred on strong regional empowerment.

Allow me now to take up a very delicate issue, even if reluctantly. Let us call it the ethical issue that, if not addressed properly, risks bringing shame upon this house and destabilizing the entire process of reform. In mentioning the ethical issue with regard to Security Council reform, I am referring to the resort by the group of four States to financial leverage and pressure in order to induce a Government to align or not align itself with a certain position or to co-sponsor or vote in favour of a certain draft resolution. All of us in the Hall know what has been going on in some capitals, including, for example, threats to cut off financial assistance or stop the implementation of a certain project. It is now time for those who care about the Organization to stand up and say, Enough is enough.

Not later than yesterday morning — but, believe me, this is only the latest example of many such

instances — a donor country member of the group of four informed a Government that had co-sponsored the draft resolution put forth by Uniting for Consensus that, because that country was not siding with the group of four and was instead siding with Uniting for Consensus, the donor would put an end to a development project already in place in that country. That project, with a value of $460,000, concerns children, by the way. The donor also informed the country in question that it would never start another important infrastructure project that had already been decided upon.

Is not that kind of improper and unethical behaviour a shame? It is a shame that, for the sake of preserving the dignity of all Member States, we can tolerate no longer. I will say it again. Enough is enough. After the oil-for-food scandal, the Organization — which is to say, all of us, Member States as well as those who have institutional responsibilities in the Organization — cannot afford the luxury of another scandal that is much more serious and destabilizing than the oil-for-food scandal. For this is not a question of pocketing money; it is a question of ethics and moral values. It is a question of blackmailing some sectors of the membership and taking undue advantage of their vital needs. Enough is enough.

We should promote a public culture in the United Nations in which responsible political advocacy, without distortions or abuse, becomes the operative norm, a culture in which legitimate political advocacy or lobbying do not cross an undoubtedly thin borderline and become blackmail and corruptive practices. Donor countries should remember that development aid cannot become a pretext for uncalled-for influence.

If we want to avoid betraying those Members that believe in the Organization and in its ethical foundations, we have a moral obligation not to allow the reform of the Security Council to be decided in this unhealthy and poisoned environment. I am sure that you, Mr. President, and the Secretary-General will not turn your heads and that you will not want to be responsible before the international community for deciding to sweep the dust under the carpet and foregoing an in-depth assessment of the situation through an independent committee of inquiry, or any other initiative that you would deem appropriate.

What is at stake is the credibility of the Organization and its reform process. As the Secretary-General has said, we are striving for freedom from fear; yes, that is indeed true. We are fighting to free a Member State from the fear of losing financial assistance and foreign development aid just for refusing to comply with requests for political allegiance from someone more powerful. Reforms cannot be dictated by power or money. They have to be dictated by principles. It is our duty to strengthen the hand of those Member States who rely upon the Organization, who must know that they will be able to say no to improper and unethical requests without fear and without suffering financial consequences that would be unbearable for them.

It is time we all say, Enough is enough! The Organization cannot accept, cannot tolerate and definitely cannot afford a stained reform that is perceived as the result of corruptive practices. We trust, Mr. President, in your leadership, wisdom and resolve.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia, who will also introduce draft resolution A/59/L.68.

Mrs. Holguín (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Colombia has worked for several years to devise a reform of the Security Council that meets the expectations of the international community, minimizes the differences between countries and makes a reality of the principle of sovereign equality, which is a fundamental pillar of the Organization. As a result, we are today introducing draft resolution A/59/L.68 as a sponsor. We believe that the draft resolution has important strengths. It is flexible, democratic, open and participatory in character. It also has a regional emphasis that is unique in this debate. This proposal would avoid increasing the differences in the multilateral system.

Colombia was one of two countries to vote against establishing the veto when the Organization was founded, in 1945. We have never believed in privileges. That same position is reflected in draft resolution L.68. Our conviction has not changed, and the dynamics of today's world reaffirms our principled position.

We are not at present overcoming a world war. If the world is in any sense evolving, it is towards the plurality of multilateralism, with 191 Member States

that have diverse and dynamic national and regional realities. Our development needs are not met by creating new Powers by virtue of a vote at the United Nations, a vote that might lead to deep internal confrontation in the Organization and that would benefit no one.

The five permanent members of the Security Council are products of agreements of the Second World War. Many countries arrived at the Organization with the rules of the game having already been established. They had to accept those rules in the hopes of obtaining benefits in the areas of development and progress. That was a period of reconstruction, when most of the current Members did not have an opportunity to speak or make decisions. We are now at an opportune moment to create an organization adapted to an international scenario that includes numerous actors, challenges, threats and realities. Our response must therefore be manifold.

We should ask ourselves what we want from the United Nations, how we want it to work and for what purposes we want it to exist in coming decades.

Colombia would like the United Nations of the twenty-first century to strengthen its development agenda, effectively promote the progress of countries and to cooperate to overcome limitations in infrastructure, technology, training and investment. Only social and economic development will provide us an opportunity to realize sovereign equality.

We do not want a United Nations that deals with all problems by taking coercive, punitive and forceful measures that do not lead to long-term solutions. We do not want a United Nations that makes States dependent on the system or on peace operations for their existence and survival, operations that over the years have been weak with regard to building national capacities for autonomous and sustainable State administration. We want missions to help strengthen institutions and national governance and not to distort countries' political, economic and social realities, so that their development possibilities are not delayed or limited.

We do not believe that international peace and security are built up and strengthened through the delegation of decisions that affect and distort national and regional dynamics. In many cases, States with greater familiarity with and understanding of specific situations are small and medium-sized countries, where there is greater geographical and cultural closeness and affinity. Their understanding of the world is different from that of a country of another region with different dynamics.

We want a United Nations where the opinions of all are taken into account and respected. We want a United Nations where we can all decide on multilateral issues. We want a United Nations without paternalism or handouts. We want a United Nations without dependence, selectivity or arbitrariness — a United Nations that makes the principle of the sovereign equality of States a reality. We want a United Nations that gives priority to everyone's needs and where everyone sees that his or her opinions are taken into account. We want a United Nations where every State, regardless of its political, military or economic power, can contribute to decision-making. We want a United Nations that serves everyone and works for the development and stability of all peoples.

Our vision of Security Council reform is in line with that thinking: a Council that is representative of regional dynamics, a Council whose composition is flexible in response to global changes and to the realities of power in every historical period, a Council that does not perpetuate privileges. We remain convinced that the veto must be eliminated and, if that is impossible, that it must not be extended for any reason.

The Uniting for Consensus proposal envisages a 25-member Security Council with 20 non-permanent members elected for two-year terms, with the possibility of re-election depending on the decisions of each regional group. That is intended to give meaning to regional representation and to make the countries in the Council feel involved with the rest of the membership in carrying out their functions.

We did not want this decision to come to a vote; we wanted to reach a common agreement on Council reform. But the past few months of tension have left us all very troubled. We have not communicated; we have not negotiated; mistrust and divisions have deepened. That has led us to the alternative of a vote. We hope that countries take this decision out of conviction and principle, not because of pressures and temporary, fleeting circumstantial interests. The decision to vote means a decision for history.

This exercise leaves us with the need to mend bilateral relations and the challenge of improving

relationships with the Organization. Let us not pretend that the United Nations will be relevant if we create exclusive spaces. Let us not think of strengthening it when multilateralism is being weakened and fragmented and when the great majority is relegated to ostracism.

Over time, the United Nations has become a mechanism for building consensus on the diverse and varied items on our agenda. Since its creation, the United Nations has needed reform, because it is an Organization that evolves with time and with each historical period. Despite its shortcomings, it has functioned and has managed to bring 191 States together around common goals and principles. The shortcomings call for us to change. Given that the international system is a plurality of military, economic and political power, let us adapt the United Nations to that broad and flexible reality. Let us not return it to the structure of the past century, of 60 years ago.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Pakistan, who will also introduce draft resolution A/59/L.68.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): On behalf of the Pakistan delegation, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.68, which contains the proposal for Security Council reform submitted by the Uniting for Consensus movement.

Pakistan fully supports the introductory statement made so eloquently on behalf of the sponsors by Ambassador Allan Rock of Canada. The Permanent Representative of Canada outlined the major merits of our draft resolution. My delegation also had the opportunity, during our statement in the General Assembly on 11 July, to explain the proposal. Let me briefly recapitulate the virtues of our draft resolution.

First, it is fair and equitable. It adheres to the principle of sovereign equality and will not discriminate between Member States.

Secondly, it will increase the Council's representativeness. The majority of the Members of the United Nations are small and medium-sized States. Our proposal will double the chances of 186 countries to secure membership in the Council.

Thirdly, it will enhance accountability, through the mechanism of periodic elections and re-elections. Those States that seek Council membership to represent regions or groups will remain periodically answerable to those regions and groups, as well as to the General Assembly.

Fourthly, our proposal is simple. It proposes direct approval of a Charter amendment rather than a complex and uncertain three-stage process.

Fifthly, our proposal is realistic. Since it accommodates the interests and positions of all Member States, it is more likely to secure eventual ratification.

As I have mentioned before, the greatest virtue of the draft resolution submitted by Uniting for Consensus is its flexibility. It can accommodate, through variable geometry, the aspirations and interests of the majority of the membership, including regional groups such as the African Union (AU).

We have taken full note of the proposal submitted by the African Union in document A/59/L.67. I would like to submit that our resolution and that submitted by the AU are fully compatible. Both proposals are based on the principle that each region would be in a position to construct its own architecture for representation on the Security Council. The African Union has called for two permanent seats for Africa with full rights. We see the African demand as qualitatively different from the call in the group of four's draft resolution for six new permanent members. Permanent members do not represent their regions, only themselves. The group of four countries are seeking permanent membership for themselves, not for their regions. The AU has indicated that the two permanent seats it is seeking would represent Africa and "act on its behalf". The African Union would also select its own representatives for those permanent seats. If the AU chooses two countries to represent it continuously — in other words, permanently — against those two seats, that would be possible under the Uniting for Consensus resolution.

If the African Union decides that three, four, five or more countries should occupy those two seats by rotation, that too could be accommodated under our proposal. The additional benefit of our proposal is that the AU would retain the power to ensure accountability on the part of those States that will represent it on the Council. Our proposal could also ensure representation of all the subregions of Africa. The six non-permanent seats for Africa under our proposal could enable it to fulfil the desire for equitable representation of each of its five subregions.

We fully understand Africa's desire to possess the same rights as other regions. As we understand it, Africa is seeking this right — the right of veto — on behalf of the entire African region, not for one or two States. My delegation believes that ways and means can be developed under the Uniting for Consensus proposal to provide Africa with the collective ability to uphold its interests in a reformed Security Council.

Another commonality between the position of Uniting for Consensus and that of the African Union is our shared desire to achieve a result based on the broadest possible agreement. We value the Sirte summit's emphasis on solidarity and unity. We believe that such solidarity and unity must be upheld not only within the AU, but within the general membership of the United Nations.

Since our proposal is based on a regional approach, it can also accommodate the interests of subregions such as the Arab League, the Caribbean Community and Central America. The larger number of elected seats that would be available under our proposals could be appropriately distributed within each region to ensure the representation of subregions as well as other political groupings, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Through the provision for immediate re-election, our proposal could also offer the possibility of long-term and even continuous membership for some States if they are nominated for that purpose by their respective regions. Thus, the group of four could hope to realize its aspirations if it has regional support. Yet there are two important differences between the group of four's approach and our proposal: first, we preserve the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in the Charter, and secondly, we ensure that through periodic elections, any country seeking to represent its region would continue to be accountable to the general membership through the process of such elections. That is indeed the essence of democracy.

The formal tabling of our draft proposal should not be construed as our concurrence with a vote on the crucial issue of Security Council reform. On the contrary, Uniting for Consensus remains convinced that any proposal for Security Council reform, if it is to be successful and conclusive, must be developed on the basis of consensus or the broadest possible agreement. Our proposal has been submitted to indicate the serious nature of our position and our desire for an early agreement on Security Council reform. Such a solution can be achieved through patient dialogue and consultations.

Therefore, we must express concern at reports that the sponsors of draft resolution A/59/L.64 — that is, the group of four — will call for a vote on their draft in the near future. Such a vote would be a recipe for disaster: disaster for Security Council reform, for United Nations reform and for international peace and cooperation.

A vote would divide the United Nations membership, exacerbating tensions in every region of the world, and thus would block the central purposes of the United Nations Charter. The adoption of the group of four's resolution, in the unlikely event that it happens, would lead to a dead end. It would freeze the whole issue of Security Council reform for many years and oblige the general membership to live with the status quo.

Furthermore, in the unlikely event that it is adopted, the group of four's framework draft resolution could be expected to result in a spate of candidatures for permanent membership from every region. The September summit would then become a lobbying bazaar as countries seek to promote their national ambitions or to protect their national interests. Other reform proposals contained in your draft outcome document, Mr. President, would become peripheral. United Nations reform would become hostage to Security Council expansion.

At the same time, a vote on Security Council reform would also change the rules by which we are preparing for the September summit. Votes could also be called on other controversial issues that are currently under consideration in your consultative process. The final outcome of the September summit would thus be contested and leave the membership of the United Nations divided.

We believe it is incumbent upon you, Mr. President, to save the situation, to avoid this headlong rush to catastrophe. The process of preparations for the September summit is governed by the General Assembly resolutions regarding the modalities for our work. Resolution 59/291 states clearly that our objective is to promote the "broadest possible agreement on all major issues". The broadest possible agreement cannot be achieved through a divisive and controversial vote.

We hope, Mr. President, that you will declare that such a vote is inconsistent with the rules and modalities adopted for the preparation of the September summit. Such a vote would be all the more questionable in view of the methods resorted to in order to garner support, which were mentioned by the Permanent Representative of Italy. We hope that instead of scheduling a vote, you will resume the process of dialogue and consultations that you had initiated between the group of four and Uniting for Consensus and that you will include the African Union and other stakeholders in such a dialogue. It is only through such dialogue and consultations that we can reach an agreement that can accommodate the interests of all Member States, can be approved by consensus and can stand a realistic chance of securing early and equitable reform of the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 53.

Programme of work

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to inform members that the 13th informal meeting of the plenary, which was originally scheduled for 27 July 2005, will be held on Thursday, 28 July 2005 at 10 a.m. in Conference Room 1 to discuss the revised text of the President's draft outcome document of the September High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly. That will allow the necessary time for the translation of the document into all the official languages.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.